

Grads Sue Government

EDUCATION MINISTRY FACED WITH SUIT AS PROVINCIAL ELECTION NEARS

BY JON BRICKER

A government reaping millions off unwitting student borrowers smacks of breach of contract, say graduates hit by a recent change to provincial loan policy.

The graduates are bringing their claims of the government's \$30 million heist to bear in a class action suit before Quebec's Superior Court.

The reform, which demands that students start paying interest immediately upon graduating, was applied retroactively to existing contracts which had allowed a six month period before repayment had to begin. Worse still, say the plaintiffs, is that the reform accompanied no notification for 1998 grads who were dismayed in June to find out that they already owed interest.

"The government should be honouring its' contracts," said

Harry Dikranian, plaintiff in the case, seeking standing to represent the estimated 50,000 affected post-secondary and CEGEP students.

"If you don't tell me that I have to start repaying, you're screwing me out of six months of interest that I shouldn't have to pay," said Dikranian, who was told that the Ministry of Education intended to send out notices in December to students whose loans had begun to accumulate interest six months earlier.

One Ministry spokesperson, reached for comment after several unreturned calls, claimed no knowledge of the law change or suit at issue. A second representative said the Ministry had no comment.

The Parti Québécois introduced the motion late in the

evening on December 18, the night before the National Assembly broke for winter holidays.

"That is totally unfair, but it's usual with this government," said Liberal Education Critic Henri-Francois Gauthier.

Dikranian, who recently passed his bar exam, after receiving his degrees here at McGill, has already received the names of over thirty students interested in adding their names to the Class Action. He hopes to add several more of the estimated 50,000 graduates whose loans had interest applied retroactively. With loans averaging over \$15,000, affected students were charged an average \$600 in unanticipated interest.

The Class Action motion follows claims of a generally nega-



PROTESTERS AT CITY HALL TAKE A BREATH AND SHOW OF THEIR WARES.
STORY ON PAGE 9

tive reception afforded the droves of concerned students who called the Ministry of Education.

"Some [Ministry representatives] gave answers like 'The Minister is a lawyer' — meaning he knows what he is doing," said Dikranian of the responses received by some students questioning the contractual legality of the retroactive application. He was also told that he should have consulted a newspaper to keep abreast of loan law reform.

"It seems like this government thinks that students make an easy target," he said, citing attacks on education such as tuition hikes, despite bleak employment prospects for graduates. "University is not a right but a privilege if this continues as a trend," he added.

Student concerns are heightened by recent federal changes to student bankruptcy law which have students discharged from bankruptcy after ten years, a longer period than that afforded anyone else. "Don't make it harder for students to pay loans, at the same time try increase the period to be discharged from bankruptcy to ten years," said Dikranian.

The suit also marks a warning to the province that its' actions could cast a light on election campaigning. Recent indications are that an election looms in late November, just days after the November 16 ruling on whether Dikranian can proceed with the Class Action motion.

(cont. on page 10)

Vigil For Hate Crime Victim Held

QUEER MCGILL ORGANISES NEW ACTIVIST GROUP AGAINST HATE CRIMES

BY JASON CHOW

McGill students and members of the Montréal queer community took part in a vigil last Thursday to mourn the death of Matthew Shepard.

Shepard, a student at the University of Wyoming, was found severely beaten on October 9, and died 3 days later of his wounds. It has been verified that his sexual orientation was a motive for the attack.

The vigil, held at the Shatner building, was an opportunity for students to voice their emotions and to reflect upon the harsh reality of hate crimes in North America.

Marlo Ritchie, co-administrator of Queer McGill, said that the organisation responded to the concern of the queer community. Many students contacted QM and asked for their involvement as

many similar vigils and protests have already taken place across the U.S. The McGill vigil was the first in Montréal.

"It was important that we respond quickly and provide a safe forum for people to express their emotions," said Ritchie.

She also added that she was pleased with the turnout: "It was a success. Word spread like wildfire."

Also in response to the event, Ritchie has been organising a new activist group to protest hate crimes and encourage more legislation to protect queers against further such attacks.

Jawad Qureshi, also a co-administrator of QM, emphasized the importance of a new group. He noted that the police have developed a reputation for turning a blind eye to hate crimes against

queers.

"The police are notorious for not doing anything," Qureshi said. "There has been major harassment from them. You don't feel safe."

He also added that QM tried contacting the MUC police about bringing a spokesperson to come to McGill to discuss hate crimes. But the police were unco-operative: "We got no response. None."

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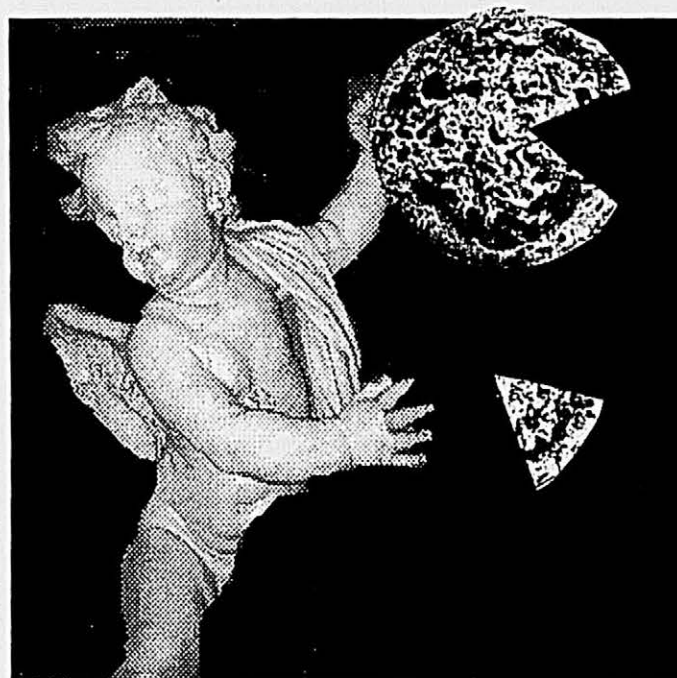
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Election of new treasurer

Letter to the Editor

October 23, 1998

[RE: Students and Issues... October 19, 1998 news issue]

It appears that the McGill Daily may have unintentionally misrepresented our intention to support the efforts of other student organizations.

As SSMU VP External it was I who approached PGSS VP External Haruner Rashid to offer our assistance. I was informed that a motion of support would be most appreciated. The SSMU shortly thereafter approved a motion supporting the actions of the PGSS. Posters were up all over McGill's campus, informing both graduated and undergraduate students. Under no circumstances was the SSMU "absent" from the cause.

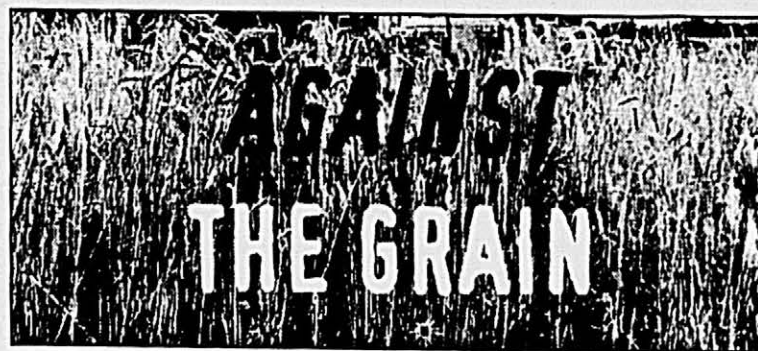
Moreover, although there happen to be two national student lobby organizations, we believe that it is important for student groups to support one another in the pursuit of common goals. It was in following this philosophy

that we supported the actions of our fellow student associations.

The SSMU also pursues the goals of quality and accessibility of education, as well as the unresolved question of student mobility rights. This is evidenced, for example, by the progress we are making with our unprecedented lawsuit against the Quebec Government, challenging its discriminatory tuition policy. We will continue to strive for these ideals through our combined efforts with other student organizations such as the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and La Fédération Étudiante Universitaire du Québec. Only by constructively working together, and not giving in to unproductive rivalries, can the student movement truly achieve tangible results.

Yours truly,
Jeffrey Feiner,
Vice President External Affairs

(letters to the editor continued on page)



Pinochet's Vile History

BY
JEFF
WEBBER

I wonder what Margaret Thatcher and General Augusto Pinochet discussed as they sat down to tea at Thatcher's London home two weeks ago. Was it Pinochet's valiant dedication to saving British lives in the 1982 Falklands War between Britain and Argentina? Perhaps it was the preliminary stages of Thatcher's now fully conceived notions on single moms: that single mothers would be better off in the loving hands of religious institutions rather than receiving benefits from the state (an idea expressed to a U.S. audience last Thursday).

Whatever they did discuss, they probably neglected some of the more salient aspects of Pinochet's 1973-1990 dictatorship in Chile - at least more salient to those Chileans who were tortured and jailed themselves, or who lost loved ones to Pinochet's military "stability" tactics.

For those who don't know already, a Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzón, broadened his warrant for Pinochet's arrest this week, to include charges of genocide, torture and terrorism involving 94 people of different nationalities.

Garzón is requesting that Pinochet be extradited to Madrid to answer the charges. Pinochet and his lawyers are arguing that he is immune to charges because of his alleged status as a diplomat. Finally, British Foreign Office officials are denying that Pinochet was either an accredited diplomat or a head of state when he entered Britain for back surgery.

In any case, Pinochet apologists (namely the U.S. and Thatcher) must be unconditionally discredited. To do so is not difficult, but it remains the objective of this week's column.

The two apologists in question are advocating Pinochet's return to Chile for different reasons. First, as it came out in her letter to The Times in London, Thatcher is friends with Pinochet because Pinochet was a friend of Britain in the Falklands War. She claims that Chile's alliance with Britain in

that war saved many British lives. (This reason, of course, is only an addition to Thatcher's well renowned basic lack of respect for human dignity.)

Second, the reasons for U.S. behind-the-scenes pressure on Britain to release Pinochet to Chile, stems from the American role in Pinochet's 1973 violent accession to power. The U.S. clearly does not want a fresh wave of press coverage regarding their complicity in the deaths of over 3,000 Chileans.

What is most important to remember in this milieu, however, is what Pinochet is responsible for. In 1973, with the assistance of over 400 U.S. "advisers," Pinochet staged a military coup ending the three year reign of democratically-elected socialist, Salvador Allende. The coup consisted of British-made Hawker Hunter planes bombing the presidential palace, wherein Allende remained until his death (It has never been verified if it was murder or suicide).

Since that horrific day began until the end of Pinochet's regime, there were approximately 3,000 murders conducted by the state, and another 2,000 of what the mainstream press has called "disappearances." I think it's safe to presume that if these people disappeared in 1973, they're dead.

The National Stadium in Santiago was transformed into a torture arena where "subversives" were subjected to the spray of firing squads, torture, and the sight of their loved ones dying. Other victims of Pinochet's wrath were buried in mine shafts, in unmarked graves, and in places still unknown.

But lost in the statistics are the painful personal accounts of victims. Luis Munoz told *The Guardian Weekly* he looked on as his

wife, a 24-year-old journalist, was shot in the back as she ran from the Chilean military in November of 1974. A month later Munoz was imprisoned by Pinochet's gulag.

"They gave me three months in that place where I saw horrible things and they did horrible things to me. They took people's nails out, burned people with cigarettes, asphyxiated people with plastic bags, tortured people with electric shocks in front of their children," Munoz said.

Carlos Torres, who was active in the anti-Pinochet student movement in 1973 and subsequently escaped to Canada, was subjected to similar torture. He told *The Globe And Mail* that water was poured onto the floor of his cell, and was then touched with a live electrical wire. Further, he was held down as other military goons applied electric shocks to his tongue, his nose, his testicles, and his anus.

Though, what was the most difficult for Torres was the similar torture of his wife, after he had not disclosed information during his own ordeal.

Unless the aim is to validate these heinous crimes against human beings; unless the world is to value certain human lives (British lives in the case of Thatcher) over Chilean lives; unless the international community is advocating the perpetuation of torture by dictators in the Third World's future, Pinochet has to be extradited to Spain and convicted of the said charges.

Thatcher's inane argument that "There were indeed abuses of human rights in Chile and acts of violence on both sides of the political divide," completely fabricates the events of 1973 and the repressive years that followed. The U.S. overtures for Pinochet not to be extradited are callous and insulting coming from the self-proclaimed defender of democracy. Pinochet must not be allowed to gallivant through London shops if potential dictatorships of the future are to be undermined before they begin.

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The New Center

GERMANY'S COALITION GOVERNMENT LEAPS TO THE LEFT

COMMENT

BY LOUIGI ADDARIO-BERRY

So, Germany has a new government. As the Social-Democratic Party and the Green Party have jumped into bed together, Germany has overnight become a more progressive country than ever before, and the future looks bright.

Increases to funding of social programs. Increases of taxes on corporations. Increases of taxes on gasoline. Combine this with the elimination of nuclear power, and, probably most significantly, the new German immigration policy, and Germany looks like a country being run by a truly socially conscious government.

But before Germany gets the Most-Progressive-Country-In-Europe award, let's step back for a second and take a more rounded look at the situation in Germany.

The Social-Democratic Party, or SPD, took the largest percentage of the votes and, needing only a few percent more, opted for the Green party as the most

logical choice. But was this done for reasons of similar policy and mandates, or because the Green Party, having received only a small percentage of the votes, was an easy party to manipulate?

There are, however, some points on which the new German government don't sound quite so progressive:

-There is a surplus of nearly 10 billion DM in the health funds covering extended care. The new government wants to remove this money, putting it instead into interest earning accounts.

-Rather than fixing the military budget at its current size, as was the wish of the Greens, the coalition will fix the military budget against its (increasing) Gross Domestic Product.

-Though Germany is indeed increasing corporate taxation, these are not the only taxes to be increased. According to the new tax reforms, taxation on staff rebates will be increased.

This affects employees who are given company discounts of any sort (those in the retail and car production industries especially).

-Though the coalition has promised to fight unemployment, it has not touched the issue of workers' unions and wages in any manner. This comes at a time when one of Germany's largest employers, IG Metall, has unilaterally refused any wage increases to its (unionized) employees, who may not legally strike, given the current situation. The workers requested the 6.25% increase, after several years of fixed salaries.

Hearing these statistics, the question comes to mind: Where does the German government indeed stand?

Though many of the policies which have been adopted by the new government are indeed to be applauded, there are some unsettling issues still left in the

air. One of these concerns a statement by SPD head Oskar

question isn't easily answered.

There are definite advantages; the ability to avoid campaign promises by invoking differences between SPD and Green Party policy, for example. Another item of note is that given the difference in size between the parties, it should be little trouble for the SPD to ram their policies down the Green's proverbial throat.

The new German government certainly has its strong points. By the same token, there are many countries in Europe - even eastern Europe - which are still far more progressive

than the "new" Germany: Holland, Sweden, and Finland come to mind, for example. It will be interesting to see how the promises made come to bear over the next few years. Keep your fingers crossed.



GERHARD SCHROEDER

Lafontaine, in which he said: "we will not make the mistake of damaging our image through cooperation with a small party, as the CDU did in its coalition with the Liberals."

Is the Green Party merely a pawn of the larger SPD? The

Letter to the Editor

Dear Daily,

In a recent article (Oct 8) Sameer Dossani provides a personal account of the recent American military strikes that followed the bombing of the two US embassies. It is transparent that Dossani's main objective is to vilify the US and India. And, in doing so, Dossani helps rationalize the terrorist actions of the Islamic fundamentalists.

In a rather puerile vein, while describing the popular support for the air strikes in the US, Dossani states glibly that "Americans are stupid." Ironically, it follows logically that, as an American Muslim, Dossani is, consequently, also stupid. This is intimated by the false and obfuscating statement that Punjab has been claimed by Pakistan.

That the recent US military strikes were directed against Islamic fundamentalists is incidental. The Americans have not

embarked on a campaign to demonize Muslims as Dossani argues. Rather, the US has become the victim of its own success in battling communism. Ironically, the Americans are responsible, along with Pakistan and the wealthy Persian Gulf states, for nurturing the erstwhile mujahideen into terrorists, who have now turned their attention towards the US, Israel, and India. These guerrillas and their brethren have invented enemies in order to sustain their glorious march toward martyrdom.

Dossani fails to attack the crux of the problem: Islamic fundamentalism, and the hatred and the terror it cultivates. The original purity and virtue of Islam has been adulterated through the centuries by the clerics into a religion and culture that is intolerant and misogynistic. The present ren-

dition of Islam practiced in most countries is one that satisfies the desires and prejudices of Muslim men exclusively. In failing to condemn the atrocities and the inequities in the Islamic fold, Sameer Dossani only helps sustain the bigotry, and helps ensure that the persecution of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries will continue.

Sincerely,

Barry Makan
Graduate Studies, Neurological Sciences

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Bye Bye Harris

TURNOUT HIGH FOR OTTAWA DEMONSTRATION

BY LOUGI ADDARIO-BERRY

Ten thousand protesters from all walks of life met in Ottawa last weekend, all with a common message: Mike Harris, it's time to say goodbye. Protesters came from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Teacher's Union, the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, Union Steel, as well as from socialist and student groups across Ontario and parts of Québec, some travelling for as much as fourteen hours to reach the event. "We started planning for this in early August, and got together more intensely about the middle of September," said Debra Murray, Québec Representative to the Canadian Federation of Students. The Concordia Student Union, in conjunction with the Québec chapter of the CFS, sent a bus to the event, which carried students from Concordia, McGill, and UQAM. "We want to support Ontario in its fight against Mike Harris and [the province's] neo-conservatives and neo-liberals," said Misty (last name unknown), VP University with CSU. The trip was organized as the culmination of Concordia's Week of Action, a nation wide event which, locally, included such activities as the protest along McGill College, the protest at Victoria Square, and the camp out on the McGill campus.

"[The demonstration] is a solidarity trek... we are demonstrating solidarity on the same sort of issues that we're fighting here. Hopefully by demonstrating [in Ottawa], we can bring that sort of energy back to Québec" said Murray.

And solidarity it was. The demonstrators, urged on by speakers from CAW, Union Steel, and several other organizations, marched ten thousand strong, blocking traffic and

chanting anti-Harris slogans, past Congress, to a nearby field. There were more speakers, and the demonstration continued for approximately another hour before the crowd dispersed. Though the number of people attending the demo was high, some student organizers were upset by what they saw as the relative capitulation of the demo's organizers to demands of police.

"The organizers have obviously worked hand in hand with the RCMP on this," said Phil. "It's kind of depressing when you think what a group of this size could actually accomplish. Instead, it's doubtful this will even make front page news."

The protest was covered on page 2 of the Ottawa Citizen.

The "marshals," as the organizers called themselves, had worked out the scheduled route ahead of time, and the RCMP sectioned off the path with metal dividers. At one point, a group of perhaps five hundred students left the main procession to protest in front of the Westin Hotel, the building inside of which Mike Harris was meeting. Police were visibly agitated; however, marshals swiftly rerouted the students back into the main body. One irony of the Ottawa trip was the announcement by Québec Liberal leader Jean Charest of his intention to follow in Mike Harris' fiscal footsteps, cutting taxes and slashing social programs in the name of the economy. "At this point, I don't really see any difference between the Federal Liberals, (Québec) Provincial Liberals, Federal Conservatives, Harris' Conservatives, and the Reform Party," one student on the bus was prompted to say, after hearing of the announcement.



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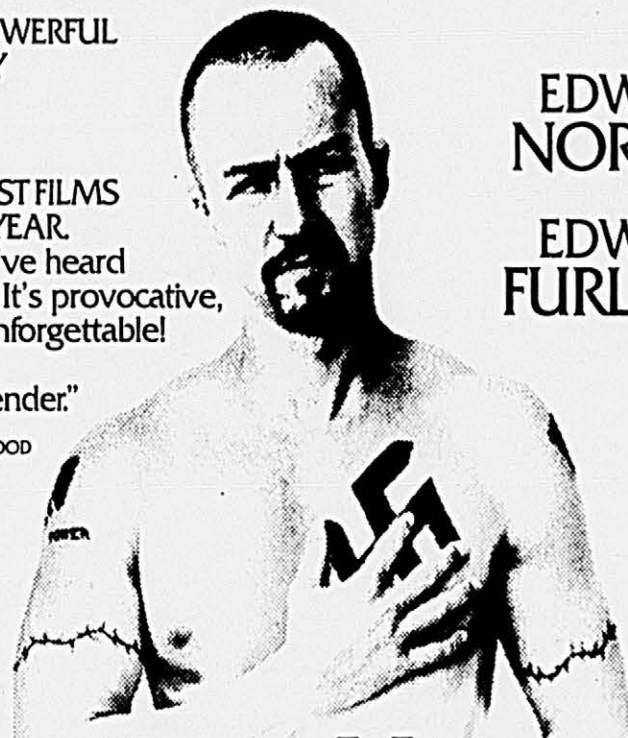
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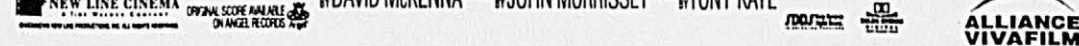
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University of Manitoba student newspaper threatened with shut-down

BY JEREMY NELSON

WINNIPEG (CUP) - University of Manitoba students may soon be without their campus newspaper thanks to a controversial motion passed at the student union's general meeting.

The motion orders the University of Manitoba student union to cut the \$6-per-student levy the newspaper the Manitoban presently receives to \$4 per student for the 1999-2000 publishing year, and to \$2 for all following years.

Introduced last week by engineering students' representative Chad Silverman, who began by saying the Manitoban "sucks."

The general meeting is the only event where average students can make direct motions, providing a quorum of 200 is reached.

"I voted in favour of the motion because I just wanted to cut," said Silverman, adding that many engineers were also angry about

much to different student organizations that needed money."

Under the newspaper's budget for the 1998-1999 publishing year, \$2 per student would not even cover the cost of printing the paper.

The motion received little discussion.

It is now before a student council committee before being sent for final approval by the student union.

However, the motion may be retroactively ruled out-of-order

because it may have violated student union by-laws. The regulations state motions must be posted well prior to meetings so students have an opportunity to express their views before a vote.

"We are talking to our lawyers to discover whether the motion was appropriate and a legal motion, and then they'll take it from there," said Kelly Friesen, director of public relations for the student union.

The Manitoban will also considering legal action against the student union and those involved in the motion if it is not ruled out-of-order, said the paper's editor Ed Janzen.

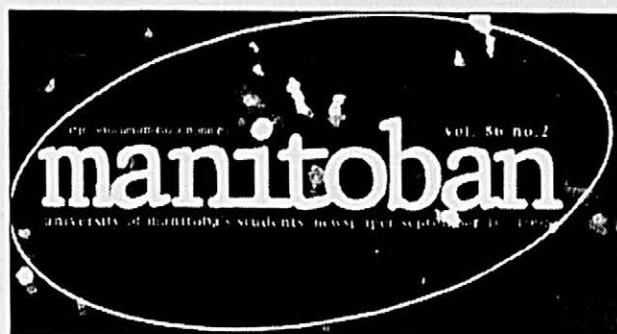
He says the motion not only violates student union bylaws but also flies in the face of a 1997 ref-

erendum in which 1,814 students voted in favour of both the \$6 levy and giving the Manitoban full editorial and financial autonomy.

"I was struck by the disorganization and the contradictory nature of the (motion) organizers' complaints with the Manitoban," said Janzen.

He added that the \$6 each student pays to finance the paper isn't that expensive. "The six-dollar levy works out to 25 cents per student per issue, which is a very small amount, especially when you take into account that we are charged with the responsibility of covering events and issues at one of Canada's largest universities," he said.

"UMSU collects 30 times the amount students pay to the Manitoban," he added.



the removal of a cartoon the paper used to run.

The syndicated comic strip was pulled after students expressed concerns it was sexist.

"I felt I was paying out too

PC McGill, SSMU To Help APEC Victims

BY DASHA MERKUSHEVA

INQUIRY UNDER CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES

The Students' Society and Progressive Conservative McGill have both voiced support for the students implicated in the APEC inquiry last week.

The two organisations have asked McGill students to donate money to help pay the legal fees of the UBC students.

SSMU is planning standard fundraising, such as collecting change near Shatner Building and Roddick gates, this Wednesday and Thursday.

Progressive Conservative McGill has declared that they will help support and defend fellow students by donating money to the UBC Student Legal Fund — a treasury set up to pay for legal fees

\$200,000 is needed to pay the students' fees. The hearings themselves are budgeted at \$950,000 with more than 120 witnesses eventually to take the stand.

McGill's Progressive Conservative Party's president Kent Smith has opened hunting season for Liberals.

"I challenge all Liberal Party University Associations to show their support for students by do-

minating to the fund," Smith said.

To that end, the federal Liberal party did not respond to repeated calls from the Daily.

Since Ottawa denied them legal funding, the students involved have been looking for money from the public.

Last week, several opposition parties urged the government to fund the students' legal and publicity costs. But the vote did not pass, and now the students have been left to fend for themselves.

An amended SSMU resolution passed at a council meeting last Thursday will result in a letter to the Solicitor-General of Canada, Andy Smith, demanding the approval of funding for legal representation.

The inquiry stems out of an altercation that occurred between student demonstrators and RCMP guards. Last fall, the police clashed with protesters, pepper-spraying and arresting students. As a result of the pepper-spraying many sought medical help. The students were protesting against Suharto, the former President of Indonesia, for his role in gross human rights violations oc-

curing during his presidency.

The RCMP Public Complaints Commission is examining whether the police used excessive force against protesting students, and whether the Prime Minister's office is responsible for ordering that police action. There are 49 complaints of police brutality that will be investigated.

Recently, the commission on the inquiry into last year's incident has come under pressure from the government.

APEC inquiry chairman Gerald Morin is accused by the government of being biased, for allegedly telling colleagues last summer that the students had been correct in their actions.

But accusations of injustice have also been thrown from the students to the government.

The most recent development in the inquiry took place last Thursday afternoon, when the Commission closed its doors for two hours, and did not resume its work that day.

The lawyers representing the students were outraged that lawyers defending the government and RCMP were aware of the rea-

soning behind the commission's unnatural break, while they were left clueless.

The NDP House Leader, Bill Blaikie mentioned that "we are very concerned that lawyers both for the RCMP and the government know what's going on, and our lawyer doesn't. It's very strange that the complainants don't know, while the defendants do, because it switches the acts."

The commission later announced that the reason for its delay in work was due to the appearance of a new witness claiming that the chairman may have prejudged the hearings.

Opposition parties have been pushing the government on the APEC issue in the House of Commons consistently throughout the last few weeks. Svend Robinson, a member of the NDP party, said, "it's outrageous that the liberal government doesn't provide the money for the students, which leads to the hearing being totally unbalanced."

Several documents appeared two weeks ago linking the RCMP's use of the excessive force to the Prime Minister's Office. From

those documents it follows that either Chrétien himself or his aide Jean Carle, directly ordered the police to take any measures to prevent any sort of protests during the Suharto's visit.

"If Mr. Chrétien ordered that RCMP action, then it means we're living in a police state basically," Svend Robinson noted.

The government also has tried to refrain CBC-TV from allowing Terry Milewski to cover the APEC Inquiry story. The journalist won a Gemini award for his initial coverage of the APEC incident, but now is accused of being biased towards the students because of the tone of his e-mail correspondence with one of the protesters.

Defending himself, Milewski claimed that he e-mailed the student only for further information on the topic, not to express his support for either side of the incident.

Svend Robinson will be speaking at McGill Tuesday, November 3, as part of his Across-Canada Speaking Tour dedicated to the APEC issue.

Microsoft and Industry Canada Sign Deal

BY CARLA TONELLI

TORONTO (CUP) — Bill Gates, chairman and chief executive officer of Microsoft Corporation, has announced a new educational partnership with the Canadian government.

Gates and Minister of Industry Canada John Manley announced the new SchoolNet GrassRoots Program in Toronto on Monday.

The initiative aims to equip classrooms with 20,000 on-line learning projects facilitated by computers and software from the world's leading software company.

It was Gates' first appearance in Toronto since 1996.

With an objective of raising

\$15-million from private and public sources over three years, Industry Canada scored the first million from Microsoft Corp., thereby securing a founding partner for the program.

The program has been tested in 600 studies using Microsoft software and Canadian kids.

The money from Microsoft is earmarked to provide teachers with software, funds and training to develop web-based curricula for use in their classrooms.

"It's fun to be here to talk about the work we're doing with the Canadian government," said Gates. "We want to make sure that technology is accessible to every-

one and it becomes an integral part of the education process."

Gates added that the SchoolNet program is ahead of its time and should be applauded.

But questions have been raised about just how ahead of its time the program is.

There has not been an independent study into integrating computers and the Internet into Canadian classrooms, concedes Industry Canada.

"This isn't the result of a pedagogical study of some sort, this is being a little bit entrepreneurial to try to really jump-start the use of technology in the classrooms," Manley said, adding the 600 pilot projects conducted so far have

cost the Canadian government about \$2 million.

But critics of the program say there may not be enough data to prove that computer-integration in the classroom will advance learning.

Brian Greenspan, a University of Toronto professor in technology, says computers in the classroom change the dynamic of education and affect attention spans and cognitive thinking processes.

The potential impact of computers on the learning process shouldn't be overlooked, he said.

"I don't see how (the new SchoolNet Program) will offer stu-

dents anything they can't get already," he said. "Computers train people to be typists. There doesn't appear to be any study results suggesting they see computers as some kind of panacea."

"This isn't the same as buying a new set of encyclopaediae," he added, adding that computer software becomes outdated quickly.

Graeme Hirst, a computer science instructor at the U of T, says Industry Canada might be better off opening its eyes to research.

"There appears to be a lot of blind optimism out there, especially with people who don't know (how computers work)," he said.

Stop The Press!

BY Yael Friedman

Should Peter Donolo be sticking his nose where it doesn't belong? Or, perhaps more accurately, does the government have the right to meddle in the affairs of public broadcasting?

Ten days ago, on Oct. 16th, 1998, David Bazay, the Ombudsman for the CBC, received an official letter of complaint from the Prime Minister's Office. The grievance was regarding CBC's, and specifically Terry Milewski's, coverage of the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation) summit last year and the RCMP Public Complaints Commission hearings that followed and which persist as a major topic of debate in Parliament and across Canada.

The PMO claims that Terry Milewski has not proceeded to report on the matter objectively. In his letter to David Bazay, Peter Donolo writes, "... lead journalist Terry Milewski, may from the beginning have had a specific and one-sided agenda on this issue. It appears Mr. Milewski has set out from the beginning to side with the complainants ..."

This letter was written subsequent to the disclosure of e-mail correspondence between Milewski and Craig Jones, one of the protesters arrested last fall. One of the main points of conten-

tion was an e-mail sent from Milewski to Jones in which Milewski writes "Thanks again for your help on this story. Not much new in tonight's, I'm afraid - we only just got on the air at all - so we must await on Jones vs. The Forces of Darkness in the courts for our next attempt to milk it."

Donolo specifically objected to the reference to the government as the "Forces of Darkness," but according to Ken MacCreath, the retired CBC Ottawa Bureau Chief, who was part of a panel discussing this situation on the CBC show "This Morning," "... the gallery has been referring to the government as the Forces of Darkness short of forever," and thus is far from being a term Milewski himself coined.

Milewski, who won a Gemini award for his coverage of the APEC summit, has been removed from the story by CBC. The CBC does stand by his credibility though, and in reaction to Peter Donolo's letter, Bob Culbert, the Executive Director of CBC TV News, Current Affairs, and Newsworld, writes "... we believe that our broadcasts have been fair, accurate, and as close to the truth of what happened as any journalistic organization can come under circumstances where parties to one side of the story steadfastly

refuse any detailed comment."

The dialogue between the PMO, the CBC Ombudsman David Bazay and CBC itself presents an example of the difficulty in journalism in defining that "invisible line," the line which, especially in investigative

reporting, must often be stretched as far back as possible in order to retrieve valuable information that would not otherwise be accessible.

The question in this case is whether Terry Milewski did cross that line in his communication with Jones and the other protesters who lodged complaints against the RCMP.

Ken MacCreath, mentioned above, feels it is the duty of every investigative journalist to use every source possible in an effort

to "... lift the veil, show us what the PMO does not want us to see."

He goes on further and states his belief that there is immense pressure on the CBC in their investigative reporting because even "the Globe and Mail does no investigative journalism and the CBC is left alone to do it."

Another question that this situation poses, is what is the

constitutional role of the government when it comes to broadcast journalism. Is it possible for David Bazay to treat the

PMO's complaint as he would that of a private citizen? Can censure by the PMO not be regarded as a form of intimidation?

It is now David Bazay's job to ascertain whether the PMO's grievances are justified. Although this is the first attack on CBC by the PMO, it is not the first time that a Member of Parliament has expressed contempt at what he deemed to be biased journalism on the part of the CBC. Bazay, who has been the CBC Ombuds-

man for the past three years, recalls that a Bloc MP complained about comments made on the CBC by a reporter.

Should the results of the inquiry turn out in favor of the PMO, it is then up to CBC to take the according disciplinary measures. As noted above, however, Terry Milewski had already been removed from APEC coverage when the Oct. 16th letter addressed to Mr. Bazay was written.

Last Tuesday, Oct. 20th, Peter Donolo wrote another letter to David Bazay in reaction to the letter he received from Bob Culbert of the CBC. In his response Donolo attacks the way in which the CBC tried to justify the accusations imposed upon it by the PMO. He also accuses the CBC of employing a double standard in which he says that "the CBC uses due process in refusing to comment on Mr. Milewski's e-mails, yet rejects the legitimacy of the government to cite due process in not commenting on leaked documents."

But regardless of the opinions and comments - and slurs - being thrown back and forth between the two feuding parties through this ongoing correspondence, Bazay is left with the job of maintaining his impartiality in the whole affair. A final decision is pending.



TERRY MILEWSKI

University enrolment down: Statistics Canada

BY ANGELA PACIENZA

TORONTO (CUP) — The number of people choosing to attend university has once again decreased, recently released government figures show. University enrolment across Canada declined by nine per cent in the past five years with some regions experiencing as much as a 44 per cent reduction, the Oct. 14 report from Statistics Canada indicates. The report attributes the nation-wide decline to a 24 per cent drop in part-time students since the 1992-1993 academic year. Among mature part-time students, ages 25 to 44, enrolment declined 28 per cent for men and 31 per cent for women.

Some provinces saw more of a decline than others. Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Manitoba all experienced more than a 40 per cent decrease in part-time students.

The largest increase of full-time students occurred in British Columbia where 16 per cent more students are attending school. Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Alberta and Saskatchewan also experienced substantial increases.

But student leaders say the numbers only tell one side of the story. The head of one national student lobby group says the report doesn't document hidden factors — like high tuition fees and student income levels — that have probably contributed to the decline. "Enrolment figures should always be perceived with caution because they're not always clear," said Elizabeth Carlyle, national chairwoman of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Carlyle said part-time students, who often have jobs and financial responsibilities such as children, may have dropped out

of school because of hikes to tuition fees. Working students are often not eligible for student assistance, she added.

Hoops Harrison, national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, agrees.

"(Part-time students) are the ones that have to keep working and can only go part-time and with education becoming unattainable by some because of financial reasons they just have to drop out," he said. Carlyle added the statistics don't paint an accurate picture of trends in education in Canada. "The federal government has not commissioned adequate studies to track post-secondary education and the income levels of people attending."

Some campuses don't reflect the report's findings. At York University in Toronto, there's been a 17 per cent increase in part-time student enrolment at the school's part-time faculty.

"(York) is fortunate to have a large population base," said Lucy Fromowitz, director of admissions at York. "We have an economy that's doing well and I think people are looking to improve their circumstances." But Fromowitz added those figures may be misleading, since the university doesn't count students in full-time faculties who are taking a partial course load.

The average calculation for a part-time student across Canada is three courses or less. However, Nicola Paterson, an analyst with the Center for Education Statistics, says there's no standard definition of part-time and full-time studies.

"That can have an impact on the figures," she said.

Federal Bill threatens CBC's independence say critics

BY MARY VALLIS

Ottawa- (CUP) A proposed federal law may undermine the independence of the CBC, critics of the bill warn.

This past summer, the federal government introduced Bill C-44 into the House of Commons.

If enacted, the bill — which passed first reading in June — would amend the Broadcasting Act and open the door for government officials to limit appointments to the CBC board at their discretion. Under the current provisions, the CBC's board and president can only be recalled with good cause, and the federal government is responsible for justifying its decision for the removal in each case.

Critics of Bill C-44, however, say the proposed law would undermine the public broadcaster's integrity by making it vulnerable to political influence.

In protest, 21 well-known Ca-

nadian journalists co-signed a letter to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien requesting that Bill C-44 be scrapped.

"At a time when the diversity of media voices is already threatened, this legislation would end the political independence of the CBC and turn this venerable institution into a state broadcaster," the letter reads.

Tim Woods, who works with the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting in Victoria, said one of the main concerns surrounding the bill is its ability to stifle the voice of dissent against the federal government — a government whose actions are currently under close scrutiny because of the ongoing APEC inquiry in Vancouver.

"In a democracy, dissent is pretty legitimate," said Woods. "But the government clearly has a different view of the legitimate role of dissent. We are of the view

that Mr. Chrétien has a studied opposition and is determined to undermine the CBC. The amendments allow the government to change appointments to serve [their] pleasure."

Judith McDowell, past president of the West Coast Media Society, isn't surprised the government wants to introduce changes to Canada's federally funded national broadcaster.

"We know that the government in power always feels like they're not getting a fair shake by the CBC," said McDowell. "The temptation to penalize the corporation or get more control [of its broadcasts] would be irresistible."

But Tim Blades, program director of CBC radio's Victoria bureau, says he's not worried about the potential for Bill C-44 to affect what reaches Canadians over the airwaves.

"Nothing passed in parliament has ever affected us," said Blades.

Former Premier says universities must change or face consequences

BY SEAN RYAN

St. JOHN'S — Universities in Canada must become more adaptable to private sector demands or they risk becoming irrelevant, says former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna.

"At the risk of being overly provocative, universities are either going to have to change and catch up or they're going to be irrelevant to what's going on in the world and they're going to perish," he said.

McKenna made the remarks during the seventh annual week-long conference of the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association which ended this past Friday in St. John's.

Evidence of the need for change at the post-secondary level, says McKenna, can be found in the World Index of Competitiveness report.

The index gave Canada a rating of sixth in literacy and education, down from second place last year.

"We have not been keeping up our productivity," he said. "The results are that, as Canadians, we're poorer than we were ten years ago."

"Other countries are passing us by," he added. "This is at a time

when there are literally hundreds of thousands of jobs available to us from all around the world."

McKenna says a major part of this problem, as well as a potential contributor to the solution, are universities and other post-secondary institutions.

"We should be stepping in and providing some of these skills," he said. "It doesn't mean that we have to walk away from our traditional role of educating the entire person — we can do all of those things. But we have to recognize that there are huge employment opportunities out there, if we provide the right tools to our graduates."

McKenna also says that too many university students are having to go to community colleges after graduation in order to find work. He added that private institutions are moving deeper into the post-secondary education market, particularly those which are on-line.

"I think the universities can continue to be a place for thinkers, for people who challenge the conventional wisdom of ideas, and dreamers even, all of those things," he said. "But it's not unreasonable as well to have an eye on the market and prepare people with some life skills, or at least

stream them in that direction."

University governance has become particularly binding for institutions, he says, which has deprived them of their ability to change and adapt as necessary.

"Today, I see the university to be so bound in structure and process that they're always chasing everybody else who are leading change, trying to catch up, instead of being out front and making things happen," he said.

He also says communication between institutions, particularly between universities and colleges needs to be improved.

"There seems to be this extraordinary lack of goodwill or lack of flexibility to allow credits to be given for certain educational programs that have been taken."

McKenna added that, while increased government funding would be beneficial in some ways, it would not solve all of these problems.

"I think governments have a responsibility to enrich the funding available, but they also have an obligation to the taxpayers to make sure that those people responsible are spending the money wisely and efficiently," he said. "And right now, I don't think that there is that comfort out there on the part of governments."

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University of Regina President's house paint bombed

By JEN QUESNEL

REGINA — Red blotches of paint marked the new University of Regina president's inauguration ceremony last week after 10 red paint bombs were thrown at his house.

University President David Barnard's has been targeted recently by campus activists upset by the rise in tuition fees.

The paint-bomb incident came on the heels of the university's "Free Education" festival sponsored by local student activists.

"I think the administration would have found [the slogans] offensive and that was the point," said Colin Hall, an executive member of the University of Regina Student's Union. "I think we gave people some facts of what Barnard's been up to and obviously that touched a nerve with somebody."

No charges have been laid yet, but campus security manager Pat Patton said the matter is under investigation.

"If we are able to determine the perpetrator, we would prosecute to the full extent," said Pat Patton, campus security manager. "We do have evidence ... (and) the police have been notified."

The red spots were removed by sand-blasting crews by 6 p.m. the next day. Repairs to the house are estimated at \$3000.

The paint splattered windows, shingles, siding and the white granite face of the house. A vehicle in the driveway was also damaged.

"From the university point of view, there's a point where things ... become intolerable," said James Tompkins, the acting vice-president of Administration.

The president would not comment directly on the paint bombing, but called student pamphlets accusing him of forcing a tuition fee increase "misleading and untrue."

"[The tuition increase] is not a personal decision by me," Barnard said. "The Board did what it thought it had to do."

Graduate Lawsuit

(contd. from front page)

Opposition parties share the students' concerns. Comparing his own party's efforts on student initiatives to those of the Parti Québécois, Gauthier said, "We are trying to hard to gain the votes of students."

Dikranian is optimistic as to the case's chances if the motion passes. "The election could mean that they want to settle quickly or try to cause undue delays."



Provincial awards program good model for Millennium Fund: Tobin

By MICHAEL CONNORS AND SEAN RYAN

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — Students in Newfoundland say their new provincial awards program would serve as a good model for the federal Millennium Scholarship Fund.

The structure and needs-based eligibility criteria of the \$4-million awards program could also be applied to the federal fund, they say. Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin agrees.

"We're so pleased with the first cut of this and how it worked that we've said ... to the federal government and (Human Resources Development Minister) Pierre Pettigrew recently that they ought to take a look at this program as a bit of a model as to how the Millennium Scholarship Fund ought to work," Tobin said.

Established in the last provincial budget, the provincial program is designed to bridge the funding gap for students in financial need between now and the year 2000, when the \$2.5-billion Millennium Fund is set to kick in.

Over the next two years, about 4,000 undergraduate students at publicly-funded programs across

the province will receive between \$500 and \$1,000. According to provincial figures, more than 2,000 students will receive awards during the 1998-99 academic year.

The awards will be handed out on a purely needs basis as long as students have a clear academic standing and are past their first semester of study.

Tobin says the purpose of the awards is to provide a break for students with loans. "It's meant to address the problem of student indebtedness," he said.

He adds the needs-based structure of the program is something Ottawa should consider when finalizing the Millennium Fund.

"We would like to see the Millennium Fund, to the greatest extent possible, if not 100 per cent, be a needs-based program."

Recipients of the provincial awards will be selected through student loan applications. Those requiring more than \$1,000 than what's available through the loans program will receive half the value of their unmet need.

Tracey O'Reilly, president of

the student union at Memorial University, says the automatic needs-based selection process will make things easier for students.

"What we wanted to do was remove all the bureaucracy because there's enough as it is and it's really difficult to get through the whole student aid wrangle," she said.

O'Reilly also hopes the Millennium Fund will use the Newfoundland system as a frame of reference when finalizing how the fund will be administered.

Still, she says the provincial awards program won't solve the problem of increasingly unmanageable student debt-loads. "You can't fix insurmountable student debt with a \$500 cheque," she said.

Dale Kirby, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, says his group would like to see a full-fledged grant program for students.

"We're looking for, if not a universal grants program ideally, a needs-based program that will give (a grant to) everyone who has to borrow," he said.

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